

Mentor program fund raiser hums along

By Mike Taylor

The Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program is rolling right along, literally.

Program Director Kathryn Eustis said the Calaveras County community has "really stepped up" to help her get the program going.

The mission of the program, "is to connect Calaveras County young people in first through 12th grades with positive adult role models who will offer support, guidance and friendship and help the youth make healthy life decisions," according to program literature.

Eustis said she is just getting matches between mentors and "mentees" together after a year spent talking to potential mentors and setting up the program.

"We wanted to get people familiar with the program," she said. "The advisory committee is incredible and the community has been tremendously supportive."

One of the new advisory committee members is Tim Hildabrand of Murphys. He said he sold a business last year and has some time so he decided to get involved with mentoring.

"There's no junior entrepreneur programs up here," Hildabrand said, so he jumped into the Youth Mentoring Program with both feet.

"Tim has done so much for this program," Eustis said.

Hildabrand reformatted the calaverasmentoring.com Web site and has helped to attract mentors to the group, but it's his fund-raising ideas that have taken Eustis' breath away.

Hildabrand owns a bright yellow 1997 Hummer H1 he calls the "BumbleV," and is offering its use to those who might want an unusual ride in the county. The vehicle seats about six in the winter and can accommodate up to eight in the summer because of a jump seat in the back.

"All the seats have approved seatbelts in them," Hildabrand said.

And the beefy rig runs on biodiesel, a mix of petroleum and soybean oil.

"I wanted to be a mentor, but once I got involved I realized they needed the help" with raising money, Hildabrand said.

So, anyone who wants to rent his Hummer can do so, for a fee that Hildabrand will donate to the Youth Mentoring Program.

"I wanted to do something different."

All folks need to do is e-mail or call Hildabrand and tell him what dates they are interested in. He will arrive and drive donors just about anywhere.

It would make an interesting arrival to the prom, Hildabrand noted, and said he'd happily drive diners to their meal and back.

Hildabrand charges \$15 an hour, per person, with a two-person minimum. For three or more people, the fee is \$40 an hour.

"All of the money goes to the Mentoring Program," Hildabrand said.

On Thursday from 2 to 5 p.m., interested riders may get a close look at Hildabrand's BumbleV at a special mentoring celebration at the Calaveras County Office of Education at 185 S. Main St., Angels Camp. The day coincides with the nationwide "Thank Your Mentor Day," and features free hot chocolate and apple cider.

Hildabrand plans to truck several loads of snow to the parking lot and park his Hummer on the snow hill.

On Feb. 21, Hildabrand has scheduled a special Hummer Club Snow Run. He said 15 other Hummer owners have agreed to allow passengers to hop inside their vehicles for a drive through the snow. The daylong ride begins at 8 a.m. at the Meadowmont Shopping Center in Arnold. Seats cost \$50 a person and are going fast, Hildabrand said. All of the Hummer owners have agreed to donate their time and vehicles to the event.

"We want to try and have this be an annual event," Hildabrand said. "We'll have a summer run too."

Call 728-1691 or visit bumblev.com to reserve a seat or schedule a ride in Hildabrand's Hummer.

Call 736-6078 to volunteer, or for more information about the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program.

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